

# Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## Briefing for Scrutiny Members

This paper briefly describes the key issues in this new legislation that have a particular impact on the Local Authority. It highlights areas where we are well ahead in our preparation and suggests considerations on a service by service basis. Note that the Wales Audit Office will be inspecting our implementation of the duties under the Act at their next Corporate Assessment due in 2016–17. This report includes a risk register and concludes with a number of recommendations for services.

For more information please contact Liz Grieve, Strategic Planning Team Manager.

### What is it?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.<sup>1</sup> This report summarises the requirements of this Act and outlines considerations and recommendations for Denbighshire County Council.

### What is our desired approach?

Our desired approach is to produce a joint Well-being Plan, sponsored by the new Conwy & Denbighshire Public Services Board. Given the new statutory link to the Local Authority political cycle, Denbighshire County Council would like to publish its new Corporate Plan at the same time as the Conwy & Denbighshire Well-Being Plan, ensuring systemic links between the plans.

The recommendation is, therefore, that the Conwy & Denbighshire Well-Being Plan is published in October 2017. See proposed timetable below:

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, [read the Essentials Guide](#).

## Timetable

### 2016

- Feb** Guidance published.
- Apr** Commencement of Act  
New Public Services Board (PSB) meets (replacing the Local Service Board)
- Jul** Future Trends Report, to be published by Commissioner for Future Generations. Compare our needs assessment with the future trends report.
- Mar–Sept** Corporate Plan needs assessment and WBFGA Wellbeing assessment work. Including: Future Trends report; data analysis; Member and staff workshops; work with Children and Young people; social media and survey work; T&CC engagement; public events etc.
- Feb** PSB publishes its own Assessment of Local Well-being (informed by consultation), sharing it with Welsh Ministers, the Commissioner, Auditor General and Scrutiny.
- Nov** Cabinet/SLT workshop to consider needs assessment and consultation evidence and to agree new Corporate Plan ‘long list’
- Dec** DCC ‘long list’ registered with Future Generations Commissioner as draft ‘Wellbeing objectives’

### 2017

- May** Local Government Elections
- Jun / Jul** Full Council Member workshop - agreement on Corporate Plan priorities
- Aug–Sept** Consult on Conwy & Denbighshire’s Well-Being Plan and council’s own Corporate Plan.
- Oct** Publish Conwy & Denbighshire’s Well-Being Plan and council’s Corporate Plan.

Our ambition, to incorporate into this development, is to review the Strategic Equality Plan (and embed future plans into the Well-being Plan) and consider opportunities for joint working and collaboration with the Local Development Plan.

## **What is different?**

All decisions must be understood in the context of the Sustainable Development Principle and how that applies to each of the Well-being Goals; i.e. are the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?

There are seven Well-being Goals, which are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

We must consider the long-term economic, social, environmental and cultural impact of our decisions. Our understanding of 'long-term' will vary depending on the issue, but generally speaking 'long-term' is understood to be 35 years, taking us to 2050.

It should be a uniform approach, and not another process or tick-box exercise.

## **The Sustainable Development Principle**

Each public body must carry out sustainable development. In this Act "sustainable development" means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

There are five things (known as the governance approaches) we need to consider to be able to demonstrate that we have applied the Sustainable Development Principle:

- Long term: The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
- Integration: Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

- Collaboration: Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

This will form part of our Corporate Assessment by the Wales Audit Office in 2016/17 - we need to be ready to evidence our progress in these areas.

## The Good News

In Denbighshire, we are already doing some of what the Act requires:

- Denbighshire has a Wellbeing Plan and its Assessment of Local Needs is a live website that is continually updated.
- Under the auspices of the Wellbeing Plan, Denbighshire is trialling an approach to community engagement called *People to People*. The aim is to create a space for people to think about and share their vision of their community and contribute to a plan to achieve their vision.

## Suggested considerations for services

Service	Impact
Whole Council	<p>All services to feed into the Needs Assessment, but also to actively use it to shape service planning and delivery.</p> <p>Embed the Sustainable Development Principle and the governance approaches across the council.</p> <p>Embed long-term decision making in relation to the Well-being Goals.</p> <p>Embed long-term planning.</p> <p>Embed long-term thinking around risk-assessment.</p> <p>Supporting Welsh language and access to services – link to Welsh Language Standards (consider them against the SD Principle).</p> <p>Involving people in a different approach to planning</p>
Business Improvement & Modernisation	<p>Review of Impact Assessment tools to support Well-being Goals and / or objectives.</p> <p>To facilitate the establishment of the new Public Services Board.</p>

To lead on the development of the new Well-being Plan (including the Corporate Plan, and Strategic Equality Plan).

Audit work to be aligned with the duties of the Well-being Act.

To involve IT in long-term planning and needs assessment (specifically future trends), given technology is advancing so quickly and is becoming increasingly central to modern life.

Archives, in relation to preserving heritage, by implementing long-term storage solutions.

Supporting long-term thinking around risk assessment.

Programme / Project Management Methodology that supports managers to build the business case for long-term, innovative, sustainable approaches as they differ from the 'norm'.

Long-term vision for our towns, maximising community assets.

Supporting City, Towns & Community Councils with the implementation of the Act.

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Communications,  
Marketing & Leisure

Again, this service can make great contributions to all the Well-being Goals.

Supporting youth engagement.

Consider heating / energy costs for its assets (particularly swimming pools).

Ensuring that partners adhere to the duties of the Well-being Act through any contracts that exist.

Take note that the Sustainable Development Charter has become a requirement for some funding streams (e.g. the Arts Council Wales).

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Community Support  
Services

Service will need to respond to the Social Services and Well-being Act, which is aligned to the Well-being Act. This is a service that has a clear contribution to make to all the Well-being Goals in the delivery of its day-to-day functions. Its contribution to the Assessment of Local Well-being will also be invaluable.

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Ensuring the services we commission adhere to the duties of the Well-being Act.

Long-term sustainability of care services we provide, extra care housing, for example.

Understanding Supporting Independence in Denbighshire (SID) in the context of the Act.

What upcoming inspections are planned or are we anticipating, and what are the implications of those – will those bodies be using a new framework to assess our performance?

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Customers & Education Support

Sustainability of school buildings.

Sustainability of Modernising Education Programme.

Providing a customer services that adheres to the duties of the Act, e.g. Channel-shift.

Ensuring the services we commission adhere to the duties of the Well-being Act.

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Economic & Business Development

Long-term impact of environmental changes on business opportunities, economic development, agricultural diversification opportunities.

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Education & Children's Services

Service will need to respond to the Social Services and Well-being Act, which is aligned to the Well-being Act. This is a service that has a clear contribution to make to all the Well-being Goals in the delivery of its day-to-day functions. Its contribution to the Assessment of Local Well-being will also be invaluable.

Ensuring the duties of the Act are adhered to by GwE, and that schools are engaged.

Involvement of schools in preparation for the new Well-being Plan / Corporate Plan.

Ensuring the services we commission adhere to the duties of the Well-being Act.

What upcoming inspections are planned or are we anticipating, and what are the implications of those – will those bodies be using a new framework to assess our performance?

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Finance, Assets & Housing

Freedom and Flexibilities – support Councillors to consider the Sustainable Development Principle and the governance approaches in decision making

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Procurement – are we procuring things in a way that applies the sustainable development principle economically, environmentally, culturally and socially?

Long-term financial planning. Does financial planning build in sustainability and community resilience?

Negotiating energy costs.

Consider heating / energy costs for its assets, exploring alternative fuels. Exploring the needs of other services to deliver sustainability, eg electricity points for electric cars.

Supporting the development of sustainable housing and tenant engagement.

Champion and encourage the use of assets to support community development (for example, fruit and vegetable patches/'let the grass grow' in county hall car park, rainwater harvesting, renewable energy projects, for example at Loggerheads)

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Highways &  
Environmental  
Services

Service will need to respond to the Environment (Wales) Bill and Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, which are aligned to the Well-being Act.

Valuing and preserving our heritage, biodiversity and countryside assets. Champion and encourage the use of assets to support community development (for example, an renewable energy project at Loggerheads)

This service has a contribution to make to all of the Well-being Goals. For example, Public transport supporting communities, Sustainability of our Fleet, Recycling that supports our future needs, Flooding resilience.

To encourage services to consider the present and future needs of our environment (for example, in our approaches to managing flood-risk, cutting grass verges etc).

Bio-diversity assets register to help inform community planning and Needs Assessment.

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Legal, HR &  
Democratic Services

Raising the awareness of candidates for council. The new council will need to understand their role in relation to the Act.

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Supporting decision-making to take account of the needs of future generations and long-term sustainability. Consider review of committee report template to support Well-being Goals and / or objectives and / or the SD Principle.

Review of staff appraisal process, member development plans and member portfolios to support Well-being Goals and / or objectives.

Legal advice supporting managers to build the business case for long-term, innovative, sustainable approaches as they differ from the 'norm'.

Scrutiny supporting the application of the Act by holding the council to account (and the Public Services Board).

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Planning & Public Protection

Service will need to respond to the Planning (Wales) Bill, Environment (Wales) Bill, and Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, which are aligned to the Well-being Act.

Long-term planning has a significant part to play for this Service. Consider renewable energy sources, conservation, the rate of degradation, etc.

Interface with partners, such as BCUHB, Police. Creating a sociable environment.

Registers of community / heritage assets to help inform community planning and Needs Assessment.

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## Impact on Regulation

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### Regulator

Wales Audit Office (inspection after April 2016)

### Impact

The current messages from WAO for 2016 Corporate Assessments suggests WAO will be examining how seriously we have taken Sustainable Development, how embedded the governance approaches are and the extent to which they inform decision making.

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## **Recommendations being progressed for Denbighshire County Council**

1. Business Improvement & Modernisation to consider the tools and evidence made available to services to better support them in making the right assessments, developing a new tool for undertaking impact assessments, for example, or similar sources of information.
2. An implementation Project Board has been established to ensure we are ready for the new legislation and streamlining our work with other new legislative requirements being implemented.
3. Services to engage with the consultation to inform the Assessment of Local Well-being and identification and delivery of of Well-being Objectives.
4. Staff and Member awareness of the Well-being Goals is important. For members, as well as Council/Cabinet Briefing, we can consider using member development plans and member portfolios, where applicable.
5. All plans and strategies must consider the Sustainable Development Principle.